

Remarks:

These remarks are responsive to the Office action dated March 17, 2008. Prior to entry of this response, claims 2-51 were pending in the application, with claims 13-22, 24, 27-33, 36, 38, 39, and 43 having already been withdrawn from consideration. By way of this response, claims 2-4, 7, 8, 12, 23, 35, 44 and 46 are amended, claims 6, 9-11, 25, 26, 40, 41, 42, 45 and 47-51 are cancelled without prejudice, and claims 34 and 37, which Applicants indicate as "previously presented" since these claims were withdrawn by Applicants and subsequently reinstated for examination by the examiner, have been reinstated. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and allowance of the pending claims.

Claims 2, 3-5, 7, 8 and 12

Claim 2 has been amended to include features that a forearm massager has a connecting portion and a forearm massaging portion, the forearm massager is mounted to the armrest from a side (laterally), the connecting portion is connected with the armrest in a position below a support portion, and the forearm massaging portion is located above the support portion of an upper side of the armrest with the forearm massager mounted to the armrest. The amendment to claim 2 is based on Figs. 3 and 4 and the corresponding description in the specification.

In such a structure, the forearm massaging portion located above the support portion massages the forearm of the user with the forearm massager mounted to the armrest, while the forearm of the user is supported on the support portion of the armrest with the forearm massager removed from the armrest.

Since the forearm massager is connected with the armrest laterally from the side and the connecting portion is connected with the armrest in a position below the support portion, a connecting means for mounting the forearm massager to the upper surface of the support portion need not be provided on the upper surface of the support portion, and therefore, Applicants provide the potential advantage that the upper surface of the support portion has a shape suited to support the forearm.

Neither Noriyuki et al. (JP10-263029) nor Hata et al. nor any other cited references of record disclose that the forearm massager is mounted to the armrest

laterally from the side such that the connecting portion is connected with the armrest in a position below the support portion, and the forearm massaging portion is located above the support portion of the upper side of the armrest with the forearm massager connected with the armrest, in combination with the remaining features of claim 2. In addition, none of the cited prior art achieve advantages similar to those of the present application. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of independent claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b, e) be withdrawn for at least the reasons discussed above.

Furthermore, in Noriyuki et al. (JP10-263029), since a forearm massager is coupled to an upper surface of an armrest by a connecting means, the connecting means connected with the forearm massager is left on the upper surface of the armrest even if the forearm massager is detachable, which is not suited to support the forearm of the user. JP52-28517 discloses a massager capable of being removed by disassembling the massager. However, it seems that disassembling the massager is complicated and difficult for the user to carry out. In contrast, in the present application, the connecting portion enables the forearm massager to be easily mounted and removed. Depending on whether or not the forearm is massaged, the user can easily mount and remove the forearm massager.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of independent claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn for at least the reasons discussed above. Applicant also submits that dependent claims 3-5, 7, 8 and 12, which depend from claim 2, are allowable as well.

Specifically with regard to dependent claim 3, this claim has been amended based on Figs. 3 and 4 and the corresponding description in the specification. In the present application, since the detachable member with which the forearm massager is connected is movable along the longitudinal direction of the armrest, the forearm massager is made movable merely by mounting the forearm massager to the detachable member without providing complicated moving means in the forearm massager. Since none of these features in combination with the features of the base and any intervening claims, are disclosed or suggested by the cited references, Applicants believe this claim is in condition for allowance.

With regard to dependent claim 4, this claim has been amended based on Figs. 1, 4, and 7 and the corresponding description in the specification. Since none of the claimed features in combination with the features of the base and any intervening claims, are disclosed or suggested by the cited references, Applicants believe this claim is in condition for allowance for this additional reason.

With regard to dependent claim 8, this claim has been amended to recite that the forearm massager has a plug and the detachable member has a socket. Such a structure is disclosed in Figs. 4, 5, and 8 and the corresponding description. By a simple operation of mounting the forearm massager to the armrest, the connecting portion is connected with the detachable member and the plug is connected with the socket. Further, the air can be supplied from an air supply and exhaust device to the massaging portion through the plug. None of these features in combination with the features of the base and any intervening claims are disclosed or suggested by the cited references, therefore these cited references fail to provide the potential benefits of this claimed configuration. Accordingly, Applicants believe this claim is in condition for allowance for this additional reason.

With regard to dependent claim 12, this claim has been amended to include features of original claims 8 and 9, and the amendment is based on Figs. 11 and 14. Since none of these features in combination with the features of the base and any intervening claims, are disclosed or suggested by the cited references, Applicants believe this claim is in condition for allowance.

Claims 23, 34

Claim 23 has been amended to include features of claims 24 to 26 and to clarify that a pressing portion is movable relative to a support base. With regard to the features of original claim 26 which have been included in claim 23 by this amendment, the detecting portion, which originally referred to sensors such as 371 and 377 in Fig. 40, has been amended to clarify that the detecting portion in amended claim 23 refers to sensors such as 343 and 344 which detect the movement of a movable portion 308 in Fig. 29 and a movable portion 324 in Fig. 30. With such a configuration, for example, as disclosed in the embodiments, when it is detected that the movable portion 308, 324 moving in one

direction reaches an end of the moving range, the movable portion 308, 324 can be controlled to move in an opposite direction. Therefore, a roller 314 and a pressing member 334 which move together with the movable portion 308, 324 are caused to move back and forth within the moving range so that the area of the body of the user to be massaged can be massaged repeatedly.

For these reasons, Applicants believe this claim is now sufficiently definite and respectfully request the rejection of this claim under 35 U.S.C. 112 be withdrawn. Furthermore, with regard to the substantive rejection of claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), based on JP52-28517 in view of Noriyasu (JP2001-204776), Applicant respectfully submits these references do not, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest the features of amended claim 23. Lacking these features, these prior art references cannot achieve the potential benefits of repeated massaging via back and forth movement in a movement range of movable portions, as described above. Therefore, Applicants believe amended claim 23 is now in condition for allowance and respectfully request the rejection of claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Claim 34, which depends from claim 23, is also believed allowable.

Claims 35, 37

Claim 35 has been amended to include some of the features recited in original claim 38. The claimed configuration of amended claim 35 makes it possible that an upper surface of a cover is a support surface for a forearm in a closed state of the cover, while the forearm of the user can be massaged in an open state of the cover. The amendments to claim 35 are based on Figs. 43 to 47, and the accompanying disclosure in the Specification.

Neither Noriyuki et al. (JP10-263029) nor Hata et al. nor any other cited references of record, either alone or in combination, disclose or suggest such a configuration. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of this claim under 35 U.S.C. 102(b, e) and 35 U.S.C. 103(a) be withdrawn for at least the reasons discussed above. Claim 37, which depends from claim 35, is also believed allowable.

Claims 44 and 46

Claim 44 has been amended consistent with the amendments to the forearm massager portion of amended claim 2. Therefore, Applicants believe potential advantages similar to those discussed for amended claim 2 are achieved by the claimed configuration, and that the cited prior art references, lacking any disclosure or suggestion of the combination of claimed features of claim 44, cannot achieve these potential advantages. For these reasons, Applicants believe claim 44 is now in condition for allowance and respectfully request the rejection of this claim under 35 U.S.C. 102(b, e) and 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) be withdrawn for at least the reasons discussed above. Claim 46 depends from claim 44, and is also believed allowable.

Conclusion

Applicants believe that this application is now in condition for allowance, in view of the above amendments and remarks. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a Notice of Allowability covering the pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions, or if a telephone interview would in any way advance prosecution of the application, please contact the undersigned attorney of record.

Please charge any cost incurred in the filing of this Response, along with any other costs, to Deposit Account No. 503397.

Respectfully submitted,

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